Annex IV: Country Information

Each of the reports is based on a combination of data derived from the following sources:

- Interviews with 2 respondents-HRAW leaders or informed observers of NGO landscape from a particular country. In total 21 interviews were held during February, March, April 2010 with respondents from 10 countries. Each interview was recorded and transcribed without attribution;

- Research of literature, publications and reports on the NGO sustainability, situation in the area of human rights, accountability and watchdog as well as about funding of NGOs;

- Web-search of sites of HRAWs and donor organizations relevant to the subject of the study.

At the beginning of each report we provide a summary of key human rights, accountability and watchdog issues that are relevant for a given country. These are based on various reports of international and domestic organizations that monitor the situation. The list of issues provides a context for the need of activities performed by the HRAWs. The list of selected HRAWs with their short description comes next and provides the reader with a sense of who are the major HRAW NGO actors in a given country. Lists are not exhaustive, but to some degree representative.

The next section in a country report looks at the sustainability situation of HRAWs and presents the key challenges and issues that these organizations face. The information in this section is based mostly on the analysis of conducted interviews.

The final section deals with the funding sources, both existing and potential ones and analyzes them from the perspective of HRAWs.

Given a very heterogeneous and to some extent incomplete information, it was not possible to formulate conclusions for each country, however for some countries we offer summary of findings and conclusions, especially when the available data allowed us to do so.

Each report also includes the list of resources and publications used, a list of HRAW web addresses and list of respondents without identification.

10.1 Slovenia

1. Human Rights, Accountability and Watchdog Issues

Slovenia is one of the most developed countries of the 10 new EU member states from the CEE. This applies also to human rights situation, accountability of government, good governance and corruption. In February 2010 Slovenia went through the Universal Periodic Review process of the UN Human Rights Commission\(^1\) which brought number of recommendations and conclusions by different countries on variety of issues ranging from “erased” citizens issues to issues of same sex partnerships or hate speech.

Many of the issues are also raised in other human rights reports and require attention. In a combined view, according to the reports of foreign or international organizations watching over the human rights Slovenia in recent years faces following issues\(^2\):

- Discrimination against Roma, especially as far their access to education is concerned

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• Discrimination against former Yugoslav residents without legal status that were categorized as "erased" citizens, that amounts over 25,000.
• Societal violence against women, trafficking in women and girls,
• Trial delays and cursory procedures for review of asylum applications
• Violence against gays and lesbians,

The US State Department Human Rights Report states that:

"the law provides special rights and protections to indigenous Italian and Hungarian minorities, including the right to use their own national symbols and access to bilingual education. Each minority has the right for each to be represented as a community in parliament. Other minorities do not have comparable special rights and protections. The government considered ethnic Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Kosovo Albanians, and Roma from Kosovo and Albania to be "new" minorities, and the special constitutional provisions for autochthonous minorities did not apply to them. The new minorities faced varying degrees of governmental and societal discrimination with respect to employment, housing, and education.

According to Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2009, Slovenia ranks 27th, together with Estonia being the leader of the group of new EU member states in this ranking 4. However, the public perceives corruption to be a widespread problem5. The Freedom House in its report mentions that in 2008,

"unproven claims surfaced that Slovenian officials had been bribed by the Finnish company Patria to help finalize the purchase of armored personnel carriers for the Slovenian army. In 2008, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption fought serious financial problems, which resulted in the National Assembly approving the lowest budget in the Commission's history". 6

2. Key Human Rights, Accountability and Watchdog NGOs

The NGOs in Slovenia are mostly service oriented and mutual-interest based. The human rights advocacy or watchdog activities are often performed as a secondary or parallel activity of these NGOs. Many NGOs run projects or programs that have components of watchdog or advocacy activities, but there are very few NGOs that would specialize only in watchdog or advocacy actions.

Below are listed several NGOs that perform multiple activities including human rights advocacy, government accountability, public-interest lobbying and watchdog activities:

• Peace Institute7 - Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies – is a non-profit research institution developing interdisciplinary research activities in various fields of the social and human sciences. Its aim is to actively intervene in public policy and to link academic research and reflection with practical educational and strategic advisory activities. The institute monitors

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3 Indigenous minorities
5 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eur/136058.htm
7 http://www.mirovni-institut.si/Main/Index/en/
intolerance, migration and asylum policies, gay and lesbian studies, racism and xenophobia. The institute is funded 35% from a private international sources (mainly OSI grant), 40% from different international and bilateral sources (mainly from different EU funding), and 25% from domestic governmental or local authorities.

- Umanoterra – Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development\(^8\) promotes sustainable development in Slovenia, particularly preservation of natural resources, balancing the human dimension with environmental one and promoting environmental ethics. It conducts also policy advocacy and watchdog of the government in the environmental and socially equitable development. Its main sources of funding are foreign (structural funds, embassies, bilateral donors) and domestic (Ministry of environment, Office for information, etc.) and some private foundations (CEE Trust).

- Legal Information Center for NGOs\(^9\) was initiated by the Open Society Institute and established by seven NGOs in 1997. It offers support to NGOs, marginalised and deprived groups (e.g. refugees, children, youth, elderly, the homeless and the handicapped) and other civil movements and groups, as well as other interested individuals and organisations. LIC projects include analyses of local legislation and comparative analyses with a view to initiating changes in legislation, thus offering socially-deprived individuals or groups direct legal assistance in the fields of company law, human rights, environmental law, social law, consumer protection law, and other legal fields where protection is called for.

- Integriteta – Association for Ethical Public Action\(^10\) - has been established in March 2009 as a local chapter of the Transparency International in Slovenia. It is a civic association and its purpose is to develop and implement prevention programmes in the area of raising awareness of general and professional public on the conditions, needs and implications of establishing the necessary degree of integrity (recently it conducted a research on corruption in the NGOs). Integriteta Association provides advice to individuals and legal persons, particularly victims of corruption, the promotion and organization of their cooperation with law enforcement agencies and assist in the protection of witnesses in this field.

- CNVOS Centre for Information servide, co-operation and development of NGOs\(^11\) is a national NGO network. The aim of CNVOS is to empower NGOs in Slovenia, promote their role as an important part of civil society and ensure the realisation of their objectives through: information services, partnership-building and networking on national and international levels; awareness-raising; lobbying; knowledge exchange and non-formal education for NGOs. CNVOS has extensive experience with promotion of civil dialogue on local, national and EU level as well as capacity building of CSOs. CNVOS is the main advocate for enabling environment for NGOs in Slovenia. Amnesty International Slovenia is a Slovene branch of Amnesty International, which does advocacy work on the global level as well as on national level in Slovenia. In Slovenia AIS work mostly on the issues of Roma people, LGBT, anti-discrimination.

- Focus Association for Sustainable Development is environmental NGO, which does its advocacy work on the areas of climate change, energy, mobility, environmental fiscal reform and consumption. Activities encompass: organising round tables and workshops, projects, awareness

\(^{\text{8}}\) [http://www.umanotera.org](http://www.umanotera.org)  
\(^{\text{9}}\) [http://www.pic.si/](http://www.pic.si/)  
\(^{\text{10}}\) [http://www.integriteta.si/](http://www.integriteta.si/)  
\(^{\text{11}}\) [http://www.cnvos.si/](http://www.cnvos.si/)
raising, co-operation and networking, following the work of the government, its institutions and local communities, analysing the developments in the fields of our activity, media work, participation in the decision-making processes on the national and international level, street actions and any other activity that contributes to the aim of Focus.

- Association for the Theory and Culture of Handicap (YHD), Ljubljana, Slovenia\(^\text{12}\) associates handicapped people who believe in and act by the principles of the independent living, free from patronizing practices of charity. It voices out views and opinions of its members, who understand handicap as their deprivilledged social status, that needs to be surpassed. The Associations is involved in national and international campaigns focused on human rights, fight the inequalities, and call for personal assistance for all.

- Environment Center\(^\text{13}\) provides better work conditions for environmental NGOs. The Environment Centre also providing basic infrastructure and help to not yet established NGOs and civil initiatives. Consequently it is trying to achieve bigger influence of environmental NGOs in decision making processes.

Specific goals of the Environment centre are to improve public awareness about nature protection and sustainable development, to strengthen environment consciousness of individuals and community/ collectivity, to strengthen cooperation of environmental NGOs and public in decision making processes, to strengthen access public for environmental information and publications, to offer to visitors basic advises and accesses to independent opinion from different fields of environment protection and sustainable development.

- The Women’s Lobby of Slovenia\(^\text{14}\) is a Coordination mechanism of 11 NGOs covering different fields of work on issues that are related to women’s life. The Women Lobby of Slovenia was established in December 2006. Its mission is to ensure equality of women and men in Slovenia and in Europe and assist in EU policies exercising women human rights and equality of women and men. It tries to be the link for everyone who is interested in gender issues in Slovenia, specially for lobbying activities when changing legislation. The work of the association is deals with three areas: violence against women, women and health issues and women in politics.

- Association SOS Help Line for Women and Children - Victims of Violence.\(^\text{15}\) It provides to victims of domestic violence variety of support services including a free SOS phone hotline, safeguarded shelter in secret location for women with or without children as well as self-help group facilitation and assistance.

3. Situation of the HRAW NGOs and their Sustainability

USAID rates the Slovenia in 2010 as a country where NGOs’ sustainability is in the mid-transition. The country gets lower ranking in theis index than any of the Baltic and Visegrad countries.\(^\text{16}\)

Freedom House in its 2009 Nations in Transit report mentions that the with almost 21,000 non-governmental organizations, civil society in Slovenia is vibrant, but most NGOs are not involved in public

\(^{12}\) http://www.yhd-drustvo.si/

\(^{13}\) http://www.okoljski-center.si/

\(^{14}\) http://www.zls.si

\(^{15}\) http://www.drustvo-sos.si

affairs. ...majority of civil society remains outside the realm of public affairs.\textsuperscript{17} This trend has been also confirmed by our respondents.

The relatively narrower profile of human rights and watchdog NGO scene in Slovenia has also historical reasons. Slovenia was bypassed by many of the foreign funders (both private and public) that were active in civil society support in the Visegrad or Baltic countries in the nineties.

4. Overall funding situation in particular for HRAW NGOs\textsuperscript{18}.

The financial viability of NGOs in Slovenia is considered by the 2010 USAID NGO Sustainability Index in transition and compared to other countries of the region as one with lower ranking. Much of the NGOs is funded from public sources or EU sources which means also delays in funding and instability and unpredictability of cash flows. It should be noted, however, that this funding does not fund watchdog or human rights activities. These are funded mostly from membership fees or self-financing, which seems to be one of the working strategies, which works, only if it generates surplus. If not, as one of the respondents puts it, that you can be either lucky and be a part of a wider international network. Therefore, it is hard to find in Slovenia an NGO that would be permanently conducting human rights watchdog activities.

From 2008 NGO resources and networks working on horizontal or thematic level (culture, human rights, health, etc.) can apply for the funding from European Social Fund. Support activities focus on capacity building of NGOs for advocacy and advocacy work of the networks. There is 12.4 mio EUR available for a period from 2007 till 2013 resulting in improved dialogue between the NGOs and the ministries on these areas. Domestic public funding for the human rights and watchdog activities of Slovenian NGOs has been limited. One of the the most relevant funding in this area recently was the NGO Fund \textsuperscript{19} of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Its purpose was to provide institutional capacity building support to NGOs working in the priority sectors of the Financial Mechanisms, with the overall objective to increase solidarity, create opportunities and support cooperation at international level between the NGOs in Slovenia and the donor countries. The eligible topics were also non-discrimination, anti-racism, advocacy, awareness raising, human rights, gender equality, rights-based approaches, empowerment, monitoring, reporting, etc. The Fund supported “people-to-people” and “soft” project activities, such as education and training, organization of conferences, seminars and other practical activities; public participation and the promotion of good governance, exchange of good practices and bilateral cooperation. However, direct watchdog activities were not a priority. Also, the national government agencies and ministries provided funds in activities of human rights or watchdog, but it was associated with many problems, some of technical nature and some of more conceptual nature. Also, many national agencies do not have a relevant budget line items to support such activities\textsuperscript{20}.

Similarly as in other countries, NGOs report that governmental funding is often full of red-tape:

\textit{“if you have independent funding coming for example from UNHCR, then it works – otherwise you would have hard time to get funds from the Ministry of Interior of Justice, it would be extremely hard to get those finances. Even if you get them for example through the European Refugee Fund

\textsuperscript{17} The rating for civil society remains at 1.75. (Freedom House, Nations in Transit, Country Report, 2009, Slovenie)

\textsuperscript{18} Information in the section is based on interviews with Slovenian HRAW NGO representatives, and reports of HRAW NGOs.

\textsuperscript{19} \url{http://www.rec-lj.si/projekti/eea/eng/eea_eng.htm}

\textsuperscript{20} One of the respondents suggested that most effective way of redistributing public funds for NGO activities in Slovenia would be through an independent public agency which would do the work for different ministries in different areas, as it would save on the staff and simplify the bureaucracy and variety of administrative procedures that each ministry has a bit different. Similar model exists in Croatia.
managed here by the Ministry of Interior, it causes headaches to those NGOs who implement watchdog activities, because there is a huge amount of administrative work and it shrinks time to actually implement watchdog activities.\(^{21}\)

But there are also deeper problems with the government funding of watchdog and human rights activities of NGOs that relate directly to the chronic problem of independence and conflict of interests: the same NGO acts as a partner to the ministry in policy making/commenting/drafting and at the same time as a grantee which critically reviews the actions of the government. For this reasons some HRAW NGOs find easier to interact with Brussells institutions than with national ones as they are in a way burdened with their opinions. For some of them, they report, it is easier to implement human rights and watchdog projects with funding from Brussells than with funding from Slovenian ministry.

“....So Brussells funds don’t necessarily mean Brussells office, they mean independent money (for human rights NGOs)”\(^{22}\)

The weak side of the EU funding from Brussells for human rights NGOs is that many of them are administratively weak to be able to tap this funding.

“....they (human rights NGOs) do not have the capacity and the knowledge.”\(^{23}\)

So ideally, for the human rights NGOs, the funding should be coming from Brussells and administration could be in-country i.e. in Slovenia, but not by the government agency, but by some other private-public entity.

“when it is managed here in Slovenia possibly without national government administration, that would probably be one of the mechanisms that could foster the development of this field”\(^{24}\)

The existing funders have not focused on support of advocacy or watchdog activities in such scope and breadth as in other countries of the CEE. Therefore the overall profile of the human rights, watchdog, and accountability NGO community does not compare to those in the other new EU member states. Still, the impact of for example Soros Foundation remains noticable - its support enabled the establishment of national NGOs in the fields of human rights, protection of minorities, women, ecology etc.\(^{25}\)

“The problem in Slovenia is that it always seems to be a relatively nice country country with a high GDP with everything well-organized without huge violations, so therefore a lot of funders were not really interested to finance such activities because they did not see them as a priority.”

\(^{21}\) Interview with Slovenian NGO
\(^{22}\) Interview with NGO respondent, March 2010
\(^{23}\) Interview with NGO respondent, March 2010
\(^{24}\) ibid.
The role of private donations (individuals) in HRAW NGOs funding portfolio is limited to issues that can appeal to public – such as human rights protection of kids or for the victims of violence. However, for asylum seekers, the appeal diminishes and funding is not available.

Corporate funding for human rights and watchdog activities is almost non-existent.

There are no signs of using revenues from privatization or from lottery funds.

10.2 Slovenia: Sources

A. List of Selected HRAW NGOs

- Peace Institute
- Umanoterra – Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development
- Legal Information Center for NGOs
- Integriteta Društvo
- Association for the Theory and Culture of Handicap (YHD), Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Environment Center
- The Women’s Lobby of Slovenia
- Association SOS Help Line for Women and Children - Victims of Violence

B. Literature and Resources

1) About NGO sector in Slovenia (Summarised from Operational programme for development of human resources for the period 2007-2013; Chapter 3.3.5.3. Promotion of the development of NGOs, social and civil dialogue) http://www.rec-lj.si/projekti/eea/eng/documents/D1_About_NGO_sector_in_Slovenia.pdf


26 http://www.mirovni-institut.si/Main/Index/en/
27 http://www.umanotera.org
28 http://www.pic.si/
29 http://www.integriteta.si/
30 http://www.yhd-drustvo.si/
31 http://www.okoljski-center.si/
32 http://www.zls.si
33 http://www.drustvo-sos.si
5) Interview with infrastructure NGO, March 2010
6) Interview with human rights watchdog NGO, March 2010
11) [http://www.mirovni-institut.si/Main/Index/en/](http://www.mirovni-institut.si/Main/Index/en/)
12) [http://www.umanofera.org](http://www.umanofera.org)
13) [http://www.pic.si/](http://www.pic.si/)
14) [http://www.integriteta.si/](http://www.integriteta.si/)
15) [http://www.yhd-drustvo.si/](http://www.yhd-drustvo.si/)
16) [http://www.okoljski-center.si/](http://www.okoljski-center.si/)
17) [http://www.zls.si](http://www.zls.si)
18) [http://www.drustvo-sos.si](http://www.drustvo-sos.si)